

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

CABEZA PRIETA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Renewal of Right of Way Permit M-2 to U.S. Customs and Border Protection For the Operation and Maintenance of Existing Communications Equipment on the Childs Mountain North Communication Site

USE:

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency has been operating and maintaining a radio repeater station on the Childs Mountain North Communication Site (See Map 1) since 1961. A previously issued Right of Way (ROW) permit M-2 and Special Use Permit (SUP) issued to CBP to operate and maintain radio communication equipment by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), expired on September 30, 1986 and May 31, 1998, respectively. The CBP wishes to continue to operate and maintain radio communication equipment on Childs Mountain and has asked the Service to re-issue ROW permit M-2.

REFUGE NAME:

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge
Pima & Yuma Counties, Arizona

ESTABLISHING AND ACQUISITION AUTHORITY:

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR) on January 25, 1939 by Executive Order 8038.

REFUGE PURPOSES:

1. The refuge was “reserved and set apart for the conservation and development of natural wildlife resources, and for the protection and improvement of public grazing lands and natural forage resources...Provided, however, that all the forage resources in excess of that required to maintain a balanced wildlife population within this range or preserve should be available for livestock...” (Executive Order 8038 January 25, 1939).
2. Enactment of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 designated over 90 percent of the refuge as wilderness and created a supplemental refuge purpose of wilderness protection in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.
3. Several other Federal policies, regulations, and laws affect refuge management activities. Preeminent among these is the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This act mandates the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM MISSION:

The mission of the system is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

DESCRIPTION OF USE:

The CBP communication equipment is located on a parcel of land 18' X 20' on Childs Mountain North Communication Site approximately 20 ft. northwesterly of a parking area on the northwest side of Air Force Station Transmitter Site TM-181 and located within Section 25, Township 11 South, Range 7 West, Gila and Salt River Base and Meridian, Pima County, Arizona. Approximate coordinates 32°26'44.4" North Latitude, 112°57'14.7" West Longitude.

The CBP Land Mobile Radio (LMR) facility contains a 9'4" X 18' concrete block building (See Photo 1) that includes a Repeater and 6 sq. ft. Combiner Rack (See Photo 2). The site also has a 100 ft. self-supporting triangular antenna tower with 4 VHF antennas, 2 PR-900 microwave communications antennas, and 2 8 ft. Gabriele microwave communications antennas (See Photo 3). The primary source of power is supplied by Arizona Public Service from a transformer mounted on an adjacent power pole. A secondary source of power is supplied by ReliOn Hydrogen Generator (See Photo 4). The ReliOn Generator is model T-2000 and is capable of providing 2000 watts at 24 volts DC to the building. The generator is housed outside near the east end of the building in a self-contained cabinet. The microwave communications equipment is supported by 4 batteries and 2 Ratelco solar battery chargers.

The Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)/Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (FES 06-37) (2007) recognized CBP's role on the CPNWR and its role of providing a vital health and safety and national security function. The CCP states: "The refuge recognizes the need for border enforcement to deter illegal traffic, which is responsible for significant habitat damage, disturbance of wildlife, degradation of wilderness character, and to prevent potential threats to public safety." The continued operations and maintenance of the existing CBP radio communication equipment on Childs Mountain North Communication site will provide prompt and reliable communication s through radio contact and, in turn, allow CBP to perform the functions outlined above and provide for officer and public safety.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Authorizing the continued operation and maintenance of CBP's radio communication equipment on Childs Mountain North Communication Site will require a small level of expenditure of CPNWR resources. The expenditure is primarily associated with the personnel costs for development and review of documents such as this "Compatibility Determination", NEPA compliance, and the issuance of public notices. There will also be Service Region 2 personnel costs for development of the ROW and review of draft and final permit related documents. There will be an additional expenditure of CPNWR resources for coordinating with CBP on any change to the Childs Mountain North Communication Site access road and gate, power supply, and additional users.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THE ACTION:

Direct Impacts

There will be no change in the direct impact to refuge natural and cultural resources because CBP communications equipment is currently installed and operating and no additional equipment is proposed under this action.

Indirect Impacts

There will be no change in the indirect impact to refuge natural and cultural resources because CBP communications equipment is currently installed and operating and no additional equipment or change in location of equipment is proposed under this action.

Visitor Use

There will be no change in visitor use because the Childs Mountain North Communication Site is closed to the public.

Cumulative Impacts

There will be no change in the cumulative impact to refuge natural and cultural resources because CBP communications equipment is currently installed and operating and no additional equipment or change in location of equipment is proposed under this action.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 requires the Refuge Manager to provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on all compatibility determinations. The purpose of the review is to offer the public the opportunity to provide relevant information regarding the compatibility of the proposed use. The Refuge Manager must consider all information provided during the public review and comment period. The Refuge Manager is not required to respond, but will use all information available to make the most informed decision possible.

Please provide your comments either in writing to the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, Arizona 85321 or electronically at Mary_Kralovec@fws.gov by **November 1, 2016**.

DETERMINATION

_____ Use is Not Compatible

_____ Use is Compatible with the Following Stipulations

STIPULATIONS NECESSARY TO ENSURE COMPATIBILITY

1. CBP will notify the Refuge Manager prior to each visit to the site.
2. CBP personnel and their contractors will adhere to the posted speed limit along the Childs Mountain Road while visiting the site.
3. CBP personnel and their contractors will ensure the Childs Mountain Road Entrance Gate remains closed at all times while accessing the site.
4. CBP will actively participate in and support the consolidation of existing facilities in the future to reduce the overall environmental footprint associated with the facilities.

5. In order to better coordinate with all the users on both the Childs Mountain South and North Communication Sites, CBP will participate in the Childs Mountain Communication Site User Group.

JUSTIFICATION

The request by CBP to continue to operate and maintain existing communications equipment on Childs Mountain North Communication Site will have negligible impacts to the refuge while providing vital health, safety, and national security functions.

Map 1. Site location for CBP radio communication equipment, facilities, and tower.



Photo 1. Concrete block building (9'4" X 18') housing radio communication equipment.



Photo 2. Interior radio communication equipment.

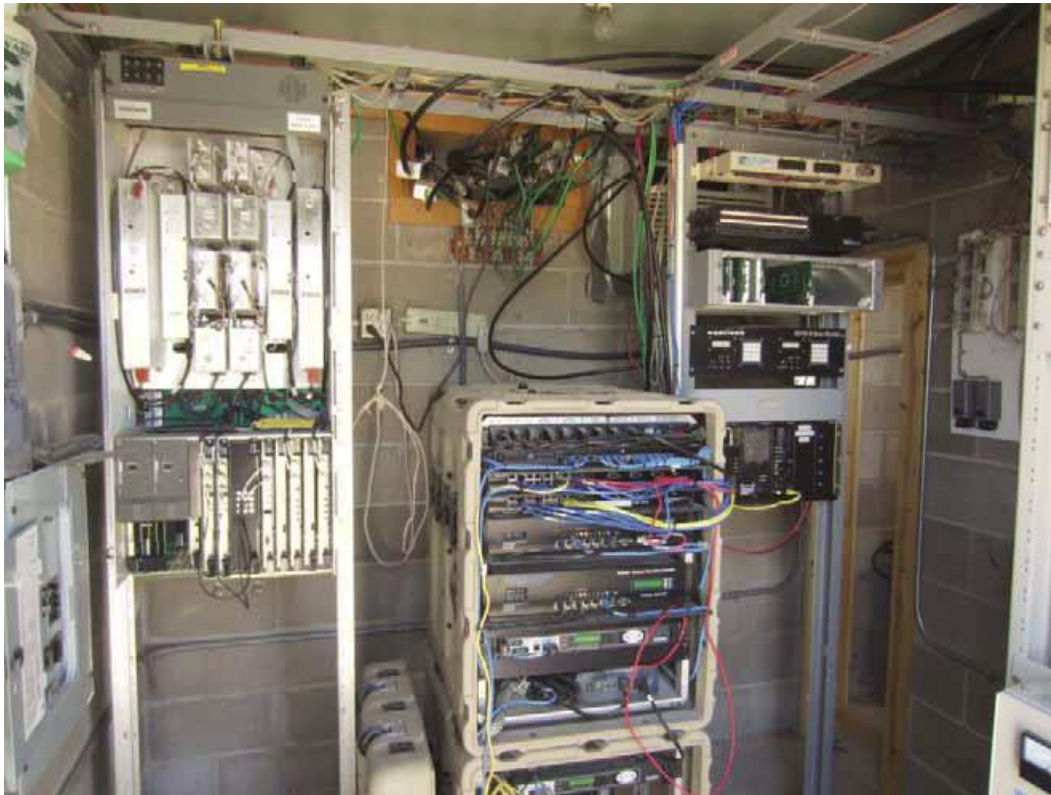


Photo 3. Self-supporting antenna tower (100 ft.).



Photo 4. ReliOn Hydrogen Generator Shed.

